PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY

Contents

Approval

JNC	February 2020
VCG	April 2019

Summary of amendments

Version	Action	Approval Authority	Action Date
1.1	Updated to use gender- neutral language	n/a	13-9-2021

Parental Leave Policy

1. Scope

1.1. This policy applies to employees of the University regardless of the employee's or their partner's gender identity. It does not apply to agency workers or self-employed contractors

1.2. This policy is distinct from Shared Parental Leave.

1.3. This policy does not form part of an employee's contract of employment.

2. Aims

2.1. The University recognises that there will be occasions when working parents wish to take time off work to care for or spend time with their child or children. This policy aims to build on the University's commitment to good employment practice and equality and diversity in the workplace.

2.2. An employee will not be subjected to a detriment for taking or seeking to take parental leave in accordance with this policy.

3. Policy

3.1. Employees with one year's continuous service who are parents of a child under the age of 18 are eligible to request up to 18 weeks' unpaid parental leave until the child's 18th birthday.

3.2. The University reserves the right to postpone a requested period of parental leave for up to six months.

3.3. Employees who have taken part of their parental leave with a previous employer may not take the balance of their parental leave until they have completed one year's service with the University of Greenwich. The University reserves the right to ask for evidence of previous parental leave taken.

3.4. The right to take parental leave is in respect of each child and applies to a child born to the parents or an adopted child.

3.5. Parental leave under this policy is unpaid. Employee's contractual provisions relating to pay and benefits are suspended during parental leave.

3.6. Continuity of service is not broken by taking parental leave. However, since it is unpaid, the period will not count for pension purposes.

4. Procedure

Eligibility

4.1. The employee must have one year's service to be eligible to apply for parental leave.

4.2. The employee must have, or expect to have, responsibility for the child and be taking the leave to spend time with or otherwise care for the child.

How to apply

4.3. Parental leave may be taken in blocks or multiples of one week, subject to a maximum of four weeks, in respect of any child, in any one year. Where the child is in receipt of disability allowances/payments, parental leave may be taken one day at a time or in blocks or multiples of one day.

4.4. A self-certificate application form for parental leave must be submitted to the People Directorate. The University may request evidence to support the request, such as a birth or adoption certificate.

4.5. Eligible employees wishing to take parental leave must give the University at least 21 calendar days' notice of the date on which they would like parental leave to start and the duration of the leave. An employee wishing to take their parental leave immediately on the birth of a child, must give notice of this intention at least 21 days before the start of the expected week of childbirth (EWC). The notice must specify the EWC and the duration of the period of leave required.

4.6. If the requested dates for parental leave would unduly disrupt the operation of its business, the University may postpone the parental leave to a period starting up to six months later. The University will not postpone parental leave if the postponement would result in the leave being taken after the child's 18th birthday. Additionally, parental leave will not be postponed if the request is for the leave to start immediately on the birth or adoption of a child.

4.7. If the University needs to postpone a request for parental leave, it will consult with the employee about alternative dates and notify them in writing of the reason for the postponement and the new start and end dates, no more than seven calendar days after receipt of the request for leave.

5. Returning to work after parental leave

5.1. The job to which an employee is entitled to return to work depends on how much parental leave and other statutory leave the employee has taken. Statutory leave includes maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave.

5.2. An employee is entitled to return to the job in which they were employed before their absence, if they take an isolated period of parental leave of four weeks or less.

5.3. This also applies where the employee takes four weeks or less consecutive with other statutory leave, provided this does not exceed 26 weeks, excluding the parental leave period.

5.4. Where consecutive absence on parental leave and other statutory leave exceeds 26 weeks, excluding the parental leave period, the employee may return to the same job or another job that is suitable and appropriate and on terms no less favourable.

6. Other relevant policies

6.1. The policies below, provide alternative time off arrangements for parents:

6.2. Subject to qualification criteria, up to two weeks paid paternity leave may be requested at the time of a child's birth or adoption (or up to 56 days later). Details are contained in the Paternity Leave policy.

6.3. Subject to qualification, Shared Parental Leave may be available.

7. Review

7.1. The University will keep this policy and procedure under review in line with legislation and business needs.

8. Further Advice

8.1. For further advice, please contact the Employee Relations and Change Team.